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Introduction

Entanglements in EU–Middle East Relations

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INTRODUCTION

Entanglements in EU–Middle East relations

Dimitris Bouris, Daniela Huber and Michelle Pace

EU/rope and the Middle East – the problematique of this handbook

Relations between the European Union (EU) and the Middle East have been the subject of close academic scrutiny for some time (Hollis, 1997; Dosenrode and Stubkjaer, 2002; Nonneman, 2004; Wassenberg and Faleg, 2012). The European Community/Union is often seen as a new kind of actor which has emerged from the ashes of the Second World War, a departure from its temporal “other” in the past (Wæver, 1996). However, from the viewpoint of the Middle East, through first an “anti-colonial” (Mohamedou, 2018; Gani, 2019; Salem, 2020) and then a “postcolonial” lens (Azeez, 2019; Ball and Mattar, 2018; Kandiyoti, 2002; Göçek, 2012; Bilgin, 2018), both hope and doubt have been shed on this development. Have relations really changed substantially, or is there actually more continuity than usually assumed? In other words, does the EC/EU really represent a discontinuity from Europe’s colonial past (Pace and Roccu, 2020; Huber, 2020)? To paraphrase Arundhati Roy, is “colonialism really *post*-? . . . So many kinds of entrenched and unrecognised colonialisms still exist. Aren’t we letting them off the hook?” (Roy and Sejpal, 2019).

Scholars have a tendency to focus more on discontinuities rather than on continuities, whilst continuities can actually also be disguised as discontinuities (Kamel, 2019a). Discontinuities – which refer to when “a culture sometimes ceases to think as it had been thinking up till then and begins to think other things in a new way” (Foucault, 2002: 56) – are rare, and the period following the end of World War II may well be considered a discontinuity “in disguise”. In his groundbreaking critical work *Orientalism* (1978), Edward Said traces, discusses and analyses Western forms of “dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient” (Said, 1988: 3). In this work, Said laid out the foundations for what developed into what is now referred to as “postcolonial theory”. For Said, *Orientalism* serves as a conscious strategy/method through which the “Orient/Other/East” is socially constructed and produced. This construction in turn allows for its management and control through hegemonic practices and power relations. This method is operationalised through images, tropes and representations of the “Other” in the arts, the film industry, visual media, literature, and travel writing as well as other aspects of cultural and political appropriation. The West simply cannot deny its imperial past (see Haugbølle and Mazza chapter in this volume), which forms a solid part of its cultural and political history and which continues to influence its policies towards the “Other”. Indeed,

as some chapters in this handbook show (Aydın-Düzgit et al., Haugbølle and Mazza, Lafi, Sen, Bilgic and Cebeci), EU–Middle East relations are heavily influenced by historical representations and colonial hierarchies to this day.

As Pace and Roccu have argued, colonialism is “silently inscribed in the genes of the European integration project since its origins” (2020: 671). In fact, both political practices and the related “literature on the role of memory in European integration has predominantly had an inward focus. Thus, it has failed to adequately grapple with Europe’s colonial past and its influence on the EU’s external relations with the Mediterranean” (Pace and Roccu, 2020: 672). As a result of this amnesia, the EU continues with these violent practices, most evidently in the areas of migration (Qadim, 2014; see also İşleyen and Fakhoury in this handbook) and arms exports (see Wearing and Schumacher chapters in this handbook) which directly flow into Middle East conflicts. When the EU conceptualises the Middle East in politics and economics, it prioritises authoritarian regimes for the sake of “security” and “stability” (Roccu and Voltolini, 2018) and has, as a result, fostered a trade imbalance in the EU’s favour (Langan and Price, 2020, Aboushady and Zaki chapter in this volume). Furthermore, as Badarin and Wildeman show in Chapter 36, this is also evident in aid policies. “As military forces and direct colonialism became unsustainable in post–World War II international politics, the EU used aid as a foreign policy device to maintain its influence in the Global South”. These practices are embedded in a larger social and cultural fabric in which the Middle East continues to be portrayed as exotic or dangerous, and gazed upon through gendered lenses in which men are construed as violent and women as passive victims to be saved by Western (wo)men, including through military intervention (Huber, 2017; see also the two chapters by Jünemann and Muehlenhoff in this handbook).

How can we understand the continuity in how the EU gazes at the Middle East and formulates its policy on the basis of how it constructs the Middle East politically, economically, socially and culturally? This handbook addresses this general problematique from a *longue-durée* perspective, *enquiring into the continuity in relations* between the EC/EU and the Middle East. With this larger question in mind, it aims to place its core *raison d’être* at the intersection between the two regions covered here. It does so by offering an equal platform to both Middle Eastern and European viewpoints, as well as to interdisciplinary perspectives that question the manner in which relations between the EC/EU and the Middle East have evolved – since the foundation of the EC and, in particular, the EU, in their various dimensions, including political, economic, societal, cultural, security and migration related ones. Thus, while the handbook is conceived of in its larger structure around the gravitational point of historical legacies and continuities which reverberates in the larger themes covered, the authors of single chapters adopt their own and different theoretical, conceptual and methodological lenses tailored to the specific topics they explore. Adopting diverse viewpoints, the collection of chapters in this handbook accounts for the perspective that what we see depends on where we stand in the sense that “every view is a view from somewhere” (Abu-Lughod, 1991: 161). This is most evident in *geographical* and *disciplinary* terms. Regarding geographical denotations, we firstly note that we couple the terms “European Union” and “Middle East”, that is, a political organisation (the EU is not Europe) with a geographic entity (see Mamadouh in this handbook). Furthermore, both terms – European Union and Middle East – are defined from the stand- and viewpoint of Europe (see also Bilgin, 2004, 2017). As Kamel has pointed out, unlike “geographical names used to refer to other regions or continents – the ‘Middle East’ refers to an area of the world largely defined from the perspective of those living on the two sides of the Atlantic” (Kamel, 2019b: 31). While the terms “Orient” and “Occident” were coined already during the Roman Empire, they became “popularised” through the Suez Canal crisis (1956) and the Eisenhower Doctrine

(1957); before, “Near East” (Western Balkans) and “Middle East” (Levant) were used to describe various parts of the Ottoman Empire. As Ali Bilgic points out in this handbook, the “Middle East as a geopolitical ‘truth’ is a discursive regime which essentialises and instrumentalises a certain Middle East for Euro/Western geopolitical interests”.

But while this book uses the terms “European Union” and “Middle East”, it problematises the Eurocentric viewpoint from which they have been produced. It does so in six broad issue areas which have emerged in scholarship on EU–Middle East relations, namely history, theory, multilateralism/geopolitics, contemporary politics, peace/security/conflict and economics/development/trade. Within these issue areas, it also mixes a variety of views from diverse disciplines with the aim of cutting across these, including history, international relations (IR), area studies, comparative political science, sociology, political economy, etc.

Combining various perspectives helps to break through the boundaries and limitations often imposed by each singular discipline on its own. Amitav Acharya has recently argued that much of IR theory is actually “European/American area studies masquerading as universal” and that “in most parts of the world, IR rode on the back of area studies” (Acharya 2020). In this vein, literature in the field of IR – as Dionigi points out in this handbook – has represented the Middle East and the EU as two “exceptionalisms” whereby the first is produced as an antithesis to the second. Another example which highlights the necessity of interdisciplinary work is the issue of trade, typically studied in (international) political economy rather than IR or comparative political science, a tendency which depoliticises the role socio-economic inequalities play in both democratisation and decolonialisation and so contributes to neutralising divisions between rich and poor.¹

In trying to irritate such established geographical and disciplinary view- and standpoints when studying EU–Middle East relations, this handbook situates itself in what is crystallising into a fifth debate (*or rupture*) in the field of international relations, focused on questions of Eurocentrism/racism and IR, as well as the imperative to decolonise IR. While such questions have been raised in the fields of postcolonialism and decoloniality, mainstream IR has, for a long time, not entered into a conversation with these literatures (Nora Fisher-Onar’s chapter in this handbook outlines what such a conversation could look like; see also Sabaratnam, 2011). The debate has already entered related fields, in particular history and sociology (Bhambra, 2010); and it has also more recently been simmering in IR, evident not only in the call to decolonise university curricula (Jivraj, 2020) but also in the literature which has been picking up on a non-Eurocentric/decentring IR (Acharya, 2010; Acharya and Buzan, 2019; Tickner, 2020; Inayatullah and Blaney, 2004) and European foreign policy analysis (Onar and Nicolaidis, 2013; Keukeleire and Lecocq, 2018; Qadim, 2014), as well as on racism and IR (Rutazibwa, 2020; Anievas, Manchanda, and Shiliam, 2014). This debate has recently accelerated due to two developments which happened almost at the same moment. Firstly, within the IR community, a virulent debate surrounded the publication of an article by Alison Howell and Melanie Richter-Montpetit on “Is Securitization Theory Racist? Civilizationism, Methodological Whiteness, and Antiblack Thought in the Copenhagen School” (Howell and Richter-Montpetit, 2020) in the journal *Security Dialogue* to which the leading Copenhagen School scholars Ole Wæver and Barry Buzan published a reply in the same journal (Wæver and Buzan, 2020), taking the debate also to social media. As the debate was in full steam, George Floyd was brutally murdered by a US policeman and the #BlackLivesMatter movement has since gained momentum in the US, but also across the world, raising questions of racism and colonialism also in Europe where – for the first time in history – statues of colonial rulers responsible for genocides were taken down (Knudsen and Andersen, 2019; Cornelius, 2020). This has also forced the IR discipline to start engaging its own racist and colonial heritage. The US Foreign Policy Magazine even brought

the issue of IR and racism/colonialism to a larger audience (Salamanca et al., 2012). While this debate is in its beginning and is evolving, it is particularly relevant for the study of EU–Middle East relations as these prevail on the back of European colonialism and imperialism in the Middle East, as well as of racism against Muslims and Jews in Europe – which has been growing particularly since the “war on terror” period and has now even entered European parliaments and governments in the form of ethnocentric nationalist parties. Many scholars of EU–Middle East relations have, for a long time, been studying the legacies and actual remnants of colonialism, most strikingly present in Israeli settler-colonialism and the expropriation of Palestinian land and disenfranchisement of Palestinian rights (Salamanca et al., 2012; Barakat, 2018; Qato, 2020), but also the US–European occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq (Welch, 2008) and intervention in Libya (Nyere, 2020; Capasso, 2020), as well as the Russian intervention in Syria.

Ruptures, contradictions and paradoxes in EU–Middle East relations

Drawing on Foucault and Said, we have so far argued that there might be more continuity – since the ‘end’ of colonialism – in EC/EU–Middle East relations than typically assumed. This, however, does not mean that there have not been ruptures – moments in time when contradictions and paradoxes in EU–Middle East relations become particularly evident, when apparently harmonious relations suddenly experience a breach, and when moments of truth emerge in which silences in a discourse – what has been said and what has been left unsaid – are exposed for the underlying interests they serve. The end of the Second World War was a rupture for both Europe and the Middle East. Europe was divided into “East” and “West” with the former being absorbed in the Soviet sphere of influence and the latter beginning to engage in the process of building a “European” community. At the same time, the Middle East went through a process of decolonialisation during which the former colonial powers and the two Cold War super powers enabled the establishment of Israel in 1948, and were also hesitant to give up direct coercive rule as evident in both the coup d’état against elected Iranian Prime Minister Mohammed Mosaddegh (1953) and the Suez Crisis (1956). Another rupture was that of 1967, the end of pan-Arabism and the beginning of the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian and Syrian territories when the US adopted the land-for-peace formula, and in this manner conditioned international law and the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force. Shortly after, following the 1973 war, the oil crisis pushed the EC to reflect on an independent and shared foreign policy agenda on Israel/Palestine (Bicchi and Voltolini in this handbook) as well as on a larger Global Mediterranean Policy (GMP) which focused on bilateral trade and thereby established a practice that would from there on constitute a central component of EC/EU relations with the Middle East. European and Arab governments also attempted to set up the Euro–Arab Dialogue which crumbled under US pressure (Feraboli in this handbook). As the US turned into *the* hegemonic power in the Middle East – with the signing of the Camp David Accords –, the European Community initially resisted the US’s bilateral approach to “peace”-making in the Middle East. In the Venice Declaration (1980), the then nine Foreign Ministers called for a comprehensive (instead of bilateral) settlement, recognised the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people – including their right to self-determination – and called Israeli settlements a “serious obstacle to the peace process” and “illegal under international law” (European Council, 1980).

1989/90 marked another rupture in EU–Middle East relations. The first US-led invasion in Iraq and the deployment of US troops in the region on one hand, and the Middle East Peace Process (MEPP) on the other, set a new reality which cemented divides in the region at a point when Europe ended its own divisions. The EU launched two subsequent projects in the Middle East, the Euro–Mediterranean Partnership (1995) and the European Neighbourhood Policy

(2003/2004) representing endeavours in building liberal regionalism and market democracies in its neighbourhoods in a manner that made the EU increasingly appear as a “normative empire” (Del Sarto, 2016. See also Lawson in this handbook). These policies linked up to how the US imagined order in the Middle East (Dessi and Ntousas in this handbook). Indeed, during this period the EU was increasingly drawn into the US-led MEPP in the framework of which it also adopted the two-state solution – not as a right, but as an outcome of negotiations. Furthermore, just as the Berlin Wall and with it the divisions of Europe fell, the EU began to demarcate clear borders with the Mediterranean to “govern” migration (Pastore, 2018; İşleyen and Fakhoury in this handbook), constituting the start of a policy which would increasingly separate the societies of the Middle East and North Africa from those of Europe – a separation which various efforts and initiatives for intercultural dialogue (Insalaco in this handbook) could not bridge.

Another rupture came in the early 2000s when an intensification of US-European military presence in the region (the Persian Gulf, Iraq and Afghanistan) emerged (see Fanttapié and Osman in this handbook). During this period, two trends crystallised: Firstly, with the dissolution of Iraq, Iran’s power in the region grew at a time in which the US began to ponder some form of disengagement. Then US president Barak Obama sought to mediate this by attempting to bind Iran in the framework of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action or JCPOA (see Adebahr and Alcaro in this handbook). (In 2018 president Donald Trump abandoned this approach and instead sought to confront Iran while fostering normalisation between the autocratic regimes in the UAE, Bahrain, Sudan and Israel.) Secondly, with the onset of the “war on terror” (Milan in this handbook), not only did human insecurity in the Middle East reach a peak, but Western securitisation of the region also accelerated (Arkan and Murphy in this handbook), thereby triggering an escalation in ethnocentric nationalism and Islamophobia (Kaya in this handbook) in Europe. During this period, the accession process of Turkey to the EU descended into a downward spiral (Müftüleri-Bac and Tetik in this handbook).

The more recent rupture in EU–Middle East relations was marked by the Arab uprisings which – with deep historical roots (Lafi in this handbook) – began in 2010/11 and are still ongoing. As populations across the MENA contested decades of autocratic rule and social injustice, they also sparked a major geopolitical earthquake in the region, evident through two related ruptures: Firstly, the counter-revolutionary autocratic regimes (the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Saudi Arabia and Egypt after its 2013 coup d’état) witnessed a rise in Political Islam as part of the first wave of the uprisings and its support through Turkey and Qatar as a direct threat to their respective regime’s security. Secondly, Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Israel feared that Iran might extend its power as a result of the uprisings. These ruptures continue to fuel conflicts in the Middle East: in Yemen, Syria, Libya, Israel/Palestine, as well as across the Eastern Mediterranean. Trump’s US selectively disengaged from the ME, convinced that there was little to gain by strategic US engagement in this broader region. This was made amply evident in its non-role in most of these conflicts and in the first rupture, whilst it was actively engaged in fuelling the second rupture. Where the US has been absent, Russia (Suchkov and Vasilenko in this handbook), Turkey and single Member States such as France moved in and filled the gap by increasingly asserting themselves, while the EU as a Union failed to adopt any role in these conflicts (Nacrou and Ghori; Durac in this handbook) or – in the case of Israel/Palestine – has ceased to play any meaningful role beyond technical assistance and cooperation.

Indeed, for the EU this rupture represents a moment of truth which exposes its vulnerabilities. Will the EU (ever) be a significant actor in the region? Does (the Middle East) reveal a weak and reactionary, an incoherent and ineffective EU that has neither the capabilities, nor the creativity for a regional strategy and depth of relations (with the Middle East) to act decisively and convincingly? This moment of truth also exposes EU fallacies as several of its foreign

policy paradigms – behind which it has been hiding – are unravelling. Firstly, its human rights paradigm has been substantially damaged by its reaction to the so-called migration crisis (İşleyen and Fakhoury in this handbook) in which EU norms, standards and regulations were violated by EU policies (Bialasiewicz, 2012), as evident for example in the EU–Turkey migration deal, conceived as a “statement” rather than “agreement” to move it out of the jurisdiction of the European Court of Justice. Migration is now seen as a “common threat” which, however, still divides EU Member States. Secondly, its democracy paradigm has given way to a new discourse of pragmatism (Juncos, 2017) despite ongoing calls for democracy and social justice to which the EU has failed to respond (Teti et al., Dandashly, Sadiki and Saleh, Tsourapas, Lounnas – all this handbook). In fact, democracy promotion has been placed on the back burner while massive human rights violations – as evident, for example, in the horrendous murder of Giulio Regeni by the Egyptian regime or that of Jamal Khashoggi by the Saudi regime in its consulate in Istanbul – go largely unaddressed by the EU. Thirdly, the EU is faced with the huge challenge of defending multilateralism and international law in the face of the onslaught on these by the Trump administration: for the EU, these are pivotal arenas in which it is necessitated that it plays a role in. This is evident regarding the JCPOA which the EU could not defend as the US slapped sanctions not only on Iran but also secondary sanctions on the EU itself (Adebahr and Alcaro in this handbook). It is further evident in the current US assault on the rights of Palestinians in international law. Whilst the US has previously shielded Israel from repercussions for its violations of international law, it has now itself violated them, as in the moving of its embassy to Jerusalem as a result of which it is now subject to a legal proceeding at the International Court of Justice. In this situation, the EU has not been able to effectively contest the US as it did during the 1980s. Ethnocentric nationalist forces within the EU itself undermine a shared EU position (Pardo and Filc in this handbook). At the same time, the EU continues to support multilateralism and protect international law, both of which have become practices of resistance (Erakat, 2017). Thus, the EU’s differentiation policy, the upholding of international law by various UN bodies (Galariotis and Gianniou in this handbook) and the struggle for equal rights by civil society initiatives such as the Boycott Divest Sanctions (BDS) movement are all trends which counter ethnocentric nationalism (which Trump embodied). This contestation potentially moves the international community away from the negotiations-based two-state paradigm to a new paradigm rooted either in coercion (Trump) or international law (UN, EU, BDS).

Studying EU–Middle East relations: an overview of this handbook

What does it mean to study EU–Middle East relations in this context? Cognisant of fragmenting labels in constructions of “the Middle East” (as North Africa, the Maghreb, the Mashrek, the Near East, the “Orient”) and of “Europe” (as the “European Union”, Eastern Europe, Central Europe, Central and Eastern Europe, Western Europe, Continental Europe, Scandinavian Europe, Northern Europe, Southern Europe), it is increasingly becoming evident that teachers and students of the EU and the Middle East need to supersede such logics by immersing themselves as subjects of the study at hand, making themselves simultaneously “teacher/student” and “subject”. Through such positionality, the Middle East and Europe cease to be somewhere “out there” for observing the Others, to become spaces where teachers/students observe themselves, in particular their role and responsibilities as educators/students in our respective university classrooms. By turning our focus to the key sites of our knowledge production, that is, “the classroom” – where we teach/learn about “Europe” and/or “The Middle East” – opens up a wide range of possibilities for superseding visions of so-called traditional Orientalists, to abandon the sets of magnifying glasses through which the Middle East and/or Europe are studied

as fascinating objects of desire in their own right. It is in this vein that the guest editors and contributors of this handbook set out to embark on a far more introspective exploration.

The handbook does not adopt a single conceptual or methodological approach but the 61 authors involved have chosen to adopt different research perspectives and methodologies, with sometimes even opposing views and standpoints. As such, the handbook is a truly multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary project. The 41 chapters that this handbook contains are by no means considered to offer an exhaustive coverage of all aspects pertaining to EU–Middle East relations. The handbook is designed in a user-friendly way, as chapters are short and written in an accessible format.

The chapters are organised into six parts. Part I, History, is intended to help place EU–Middle East relations into a historical context. It begins with a chapter by Senem Aydın-Düzgüt, Johanna Chovanec and Bahar Rumelili, who demonstrate how representations of the other and the self were often linked to political events pertaining to Europe and the Ottoman Empire. This is followed by a chapter co-authored by Sune Haugbølle and Roberto Mazza, who trace the impact and legacy of French and British colonialism in the Middle East and North Africa. Chapter 4 by Nora Lafi focuses on *longue-durée* reflections on anti-colonial movements in the Middle East from 1798 up until this day. In Chapter 5, Somdeep Sen offers a postcolonial critique of EU–Middle East relations.

After setting the historical background, chapters in Part II examine a number of theoretical approaches and perspectives in the study of EU–Middle East relations. Chapter 6 focuses on the “Everyday Middle East” and here Ali Bilgic demonstrates the power of naming a geographical space and how this essentialises and instrumentalises a certain Middle East for European/Western geopolitical interests. In Chapter 7, Münevver Cebeci explores how the EU constructs the Middle East in its relations with various actors in the region while Zeynep Arkan Tuncel, in Chapter 8, locates the EU as a security actor and explores implications with regards to the EU’s relations with the Middle East. In Chapters 9 and 10, Filippo Dionigi and Fred H. Lawson analyse EU–Middle East relations through the lenses of IR theory and comparative politics. In the last two chapters of this section, Nora Fisher-Onar and Hanna L. Muehlenhoff analyse EU–Middle East relations through the lenses of postcolonial theory and gender.

Part III focuses on multilateralism and geopolitical perspectives. Virginie Mamadouh offers a political geography perspective on EU–Middle East relations by focusing on their spatiality, while Silvia Feraboli tackles EU and Arab regionalism. Chapter 15 by Tobias Schumacher focuses on relations between the EU and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), and Chapter 16 by Ioannis Galariotis and Maria Gianniou focuses on European cooperation with the UN in the Middle East. The last three chapters of this section explore the transatlantic relationship and its impact on the Middle East (Dessi and Ntousas), EU–Turkey relations and the Middle East (Müftüler-Baç and Cihangir-Tetik) and EU–Russia relations in the Middle East (Suchkov and Vasilenko).

Part IV examines contemporary issues in the study of EU–Middle East relations. Andrea Teti, Gennaro Gervasio and Pamela Abbott analyse perceptions of the EU from activists’ point of view and public opinion in the Middle East. Ayhan Kaya explores populist politics in Europe and their impact on EU–Turkey relations, while Sharon Pardo and Dani Filc focus on the impact of national populism in EU–Israel relations. In Chapter 23, Lardi Sadiki and Layla Saleh investigate the explosion of the Arab *hirak* (peoplehood) and the “democratic didactic loop”, while in Chapter 24 Djallil Lounnas zooms in on relations between moderate Islamist parties in the MENA and the EU. The section ends with three chapters tackling inter-religious dialogue in the Euro-Mediterranean region (Eleonora Insalaco), EU–Egypt relations (Gerasimos Tsourapas) as well as gender issues (Annette Jünemann).

Peace, security and conflict are the main focus of Part V. Federica Bicchi and Benedetta Voltolini analyse the EU's role in the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, Assem Dandashly focuses on EU–Lebanon relations and Maria Luisa Fantappie explores the EU's role in post–2003 Iraq. In Chapter 31 Oz Hassan explains how the current EU–Afghanistan relationship has been textured by its past, while in Chapter 32, Anis Nacrou and Jouanah Ghorri analyse the “stop and go process” which characterises EU–Syria relations. Vincent Durac, in Chapter 33, explores the EU's role in Yemen, while in Chapter 34 Cornelius Adebahr and Riccardo Alcaro explain how EU–Iran relations are intertwined with each side's relations with the United States (US). In the last chapter of this section, Francesco Milan examines the EU's evolving relations with MENA countries in the field of counter-terrorism.

The final part is devoted to issues of development, economics, trade and society. Emile Badarinn and Jeremy Wildeman analyse EU development aid in the Middle East. Beste İşleyen and Tamirace Fakhoury zoom in on the politics of borders, migration and refugees in EU–Middle East relations. In Chapter 38, Emma Murphy examines the relationship between the EU and youth in the MENA, and in Chapter 39, Nora Aboushady and Chahir Zaki assess EU–Middle East trade relations, patterns, policies and imbalances. In Chapter 40, David Wearing explores EU–Middle East arms sales and military cooperation, while the final chapter of the handbook by Martin Keulertz and Musa McKee analyses EU–MENA environmental relations.

This handbook is primarily designed for academics and for undergraduate and postgraduate university students who are enrolled in different modules in International and Global Studies, Regionalism and Area Studies, EU–Middle East Politics, EU–Middle East Relations, Contemporary History of Europe and the Middle East, EU External Relations, Middle East Politics, International Relations of the Middle East and Middle Eastern Studies. The book mainly appeals to academics and students in Europe, the Middle East and North Africa, the US as well as Russia, China and the Gulf states. It is also of interest to specialised centres and think tanks known for EU–Middle East insights as well as Mediterranean Studies. Finally, by keeping theoretical perspectives/debates separate from the more empirical parts and chapters, the handbook appeals to practitioners and policymakers. This handbook builds upon work and research stemming from a grant received from the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union for the establishment of a Jean Monnet Network on EU–Middle East Relations (EUMENIA) which is led and co-ordinated by Dimitris Bouris and the University of Amsterdam. The network includes seven more partners, namely Roskilde University, Denmark (Michelle Pace), Istituto Affari Internazionali, Italy (Daniela Huber), University of Peloponnese, Greece (Nikolaos Tzifakis and Maria Gianniou), Yaşar University, Turkey (Gökay Özerim, Emre İşeri and Aylin Güney), Birzeit University, Palestine (Lourdes Habash), American University of Beirut, Lebanon (Karim Makdisi) and University of Jordan, Jordan (Wissam Hazimeh).

EU–Middle East relations are multifaceted, varied and complex. The current handbook is our attempt at providing a useful entry point for an informed exploration and nuanced understanding of the multiple themes, actors, structures and processes that mould these relations. The manner in which this handbook has been structured serves to highlight the interdependent and interconnected dynamics in EU–Middle East relations. We hope that these chapters serve as key pointers for a broad, in-depth understanding of how historical, political, economic, social and cultural dynamics have shaped and continue to shape EU–Middle East relations up to this day. The one general takeaway lesson that can be learnt from this handbook is that we do need multiple lenses to comprehend the intricate entanglements in EU–Middle East relations: Entanglements which will continue to shape the destinies of European and Middle Eastern nations in the years ahead.

Note

- 1 It should be mentioned that Marxist International Political Economists have written extensively on the intersection between the economic and the political/social (Tansel, 2017).

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